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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "MEET THE PRESS."

M E E T   T H E   P R E S S  
Produced by Lawrence E. Spivak

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1962

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MODERATOR: Ned Brooks

GUEST: McGeorge Bundy  
Special Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

PANEL: Peter Lisagor, Chicago Daily News  
James Reston, New York Times  
Ray Scherer, NBC News  
Lawrence E. Spivak, Permanent Panel  
Member.

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MR. BROOKS: This is Ned Brooks, inviting you to  
MEET THE PRESS.

(Announcement)

MR. BROOKS: Our guest on MEET THE PRESS today is  
Mr. McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy's Special Assistant  
for National Security Affairs. His work has been

contact with the heads of all departments and agencies charged with national security. This would include the Atomic Energy Commission and the Central Intelligence Agency.

A Yale graduate, Mr. Bundy was Professor of Government and Dean of Harvard. In 1952 and '56 he supported President Eisenhower. In 1960 he joined the Kennedy campaign.

We will start the questions now with Lawrence E. Spivak, permanent member of the MEET THE PRESS panel.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Bundy, Premier Khrushchev told the Soviet Union the other day that his action on Cuba saved Cuba for communism. Do you agree with that?

MR. BUNDY: I think Mr. Khrushchev's action saved the world from an extremely dangerous confrontation and rescued his own government from an extremely rash and dangerous act. I do not think that his action in that area has decided the future of Cuba.

MR. SPIVAK: Aren't we in fact, though, now not committed not to invade Cuba?

MR. BUNDY: We are only committed to certain assurances under given provisos which have been stated and restated by the President in his letter of October 27 and again in his recent press conferences to the effect that if Cuba refrains from aggressive acts in the Caribbean, if offensive weapons are taken out of Cuba and kept out of Cuba, it will not be necessary and it is not the intention

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of the United States to launch an invasion. We don't want to be forced to invade Cuba, but this situation is not governed by any achievement of Premier Khrushchev.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Bundy, you have a great deal to do with strategy. Have we a strategy to get rid of Castro and communism in Cuba?

MR. BUNDY: Well, I think the situation in Cuba has to be taken in two parts. The great crisis, the crisis which brought the two great powers in the world and the world as a whole to the edge of very great danger turned upon this extraordinarily dangerous decision by the Soviet government to attempt to enter the Western hemisphere with nuclear weapons of substantial range. That crisis has been surmounted.

Before that crisis and after it there is a major problem which is Castro communism in Cuba. This government has been opposed to that regime, has taken a number of measures intended to isolate it, hopes to build upon the meaning of the recent crisis in intensifying the feeling of the hemisphere which was so clearly expressed in October and November that this kind of regime is in fact incompatible with the standards of the Americas.

This is not something which is necessarily going to lead to rapid or easy achievement. It is a very different thing from a special threat to our own security and the peace

of the world which was posed in October.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Bundy, according to press reports, Senator Lausche, a Democrat, and Senator Goldwater, a Republican, have both raised the question as to whether President Kennedy has made a secret deal with Premier Khrushchev on Cuba.

Now no one would know the President's position on this better than you. Would you tell us whether the promises that were made to Mr. Khrushchev are now known to the American people?

MR. BUNDY: I don't know what Senator Lausche and Senator Goldwater are talking about, but the position of the United States government is perfectly clear and available to the American public.

MR. SPIVAK: And they know exactly what the deal is, there is no secret deal?

MR. BUNDY: There is no such arrangement.

MR. BROOKS: We will be back with MEET THE PRESS and more questions for our guest, Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to President Kennedy. First, this message.

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MR. BROOKS: And now resuming our interview, our guest today is Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to President Kennedy for National Security Affairs.

You have just met Lawrence E. Spivak, permanent member



of the panel. Our other reporters today are James Reston of the New York Times, Peter Lisagor of the Chicago Daily News, and Ray Scherer of NBC News.

We will continue the questions now with Mr. Reston.

MR. RESTON: Mr. Bundy, I wonder if we could turn from the past to the future and get your estimate of where you think we are now at the sort of half-time part in the Kennedy Administration, in the field of foreign affairs. What are the priorities of our problems in 1963, coming up?

MR. BUNDY: This is a very dangerous question because the President is engaged in discussing that himself in a program which will be on the air tomorrow night.

MR. RESTON: I am sure he wouldn't mind you scooping him tonight.

MR. BUNDY: That is the one thing he might object to, Mr. Reston.

MR. RESTON: Let's try it anyway.

MR. BUNDY: The problem of estimating these things is complicated because there are so many large things happening in the world right now. We have been through what is certainly the most serious diplomatic crisis of the nuclear age. None of us has experienced one before, none of us can therefore tell the whole meaning of what happened in Cuba.

I would think, however, that we can make the guess that

the resolution and restraint shown by the United States government in that case will have continuous effects over a long period of time. This is clear in our relations with other governments in this hemisphere. It is interesting, I think, that this appears to be the dominant note of the current, recently-ended NATO meeting in Paris. I believe myself that one should read Mr. Khrushchev's speech to the Supreme Soviet against the background of a new and deeper understanding of the strength of the American position.

That is a great, positive fact, if we can make effective use of it.

On the other hand on the other side of the world we are looking at the first stages of what I think is one of the major diplomatic revolutions of the post-war period. This new confrontation between the Chinese and the Indians is bringing a very sharp change in the whole posture of the great Indian people, nation and government. I put it in that order because I think this is a national outburst and not merely an administrative reaction. That offers great opportunity to us, provided we do not try to decide for the Indians how they will face the challenge they now confront.

There are many more, and I hate to give you a long speech.

MR. RESTON: Well, could I be specific and ask you, because I know you are very interested in the organization

news, and Ray Scherer of NBC News.

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MR. RESTON: Well, could I be specific and ask you, because I know you are very interested in the organization

of the Western world. We have won time in the Cuban case, and I suppose the question is what do we do with that time, particularly in the organization of the Atlantic.

MR. BUNDY: I think that is the right question. I think the right way of looking at this problem of our rivalry with the Soviet Union has always been in terms of what we can do to sustain, develop, strengthen our own society, our relations with other free societies and the common effort of people not subject to communist domination.

This is a major task and there is no place where it is more complicated than in the Atlantic community.

MR. LISAGOR: Mr. Bundy, I would like to ask you a question about the organization of the foreign policy machinery in the government. The late John Foster Dulles, as I think you know, always felt that the Secretary of State should not have anyone interpose between him and the President. If you were Secretary of State, would you want a McGeorge Bundy at the White House?

MR. BUNDY: I think that we share Mr. Dulles' view. The Secretary of State should have the most direct access to the President, and Secretary Rusk, of course, has that access. If I were Secretary of State, I would certainly not want myself to be in the White House. It is hard enough to do one job at a time.

There is a lot of misunderstanding as to what the White

House staff officers in this area do, and I think the simplest thing to remember is that they are staff officers. They are working for the President in the sense of the way that he has an immediate responsibility, where a staff officer is involved, simply because he can not do all things himself.

But the executive responsibility, the primary responsibility, the primary responsibility as executive responsibility or statutory advisors will be on the part of the President and to their great operating departments. That is our best to not make life complicated for the President of state and I think perhaps we are looking at we go along now to do that.

MR. LYSAGHT: Can I ask you a more specific question now about the Skybolt project which is a very important project of course?

The British seem to have put all of their nuclear eggs into this Skybolt basket -- the Skybolt being the air-to-ground missile.

Do we have any alternative to offer to the British if we should go forward now and cancel this project?

MR. DUNBY: Well, I think the way to look at the Skybolt is to understand that this is a major weapons systems development undertaking to which we were committed by our own government's decision early on in the year 1955. After we had taken that decision, the British asked, and

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But the executive responsibility, the operating responsibility, the primary responsibility as constitutional or statutory advisors falls on the members of the Cabinet, and to their great operating department. We do our best to not make life complicated for the Department of State and I think perhaps we are learning as we go along how to do that.

MR. LISAGOR: Can I ask you a more substantive question now about the Skybolt project which is agitating the British, of course?

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and we agreed that they should have a right to buy a certain number of Skybolt missiles if and when the program was successfully concluded. We have been at that program now for the better part of three years. We have put into it something on the order of half a billion dollars, against really a negligible contribution on the British side, which is according to the bargain. We undertook to develop it and to pay for it.

This is an extraordinarily complex weapons system, a very difficult one to develop. You are moving from a very fast platform, a moving bomber at very high speeds. In order to get the necessary levels of accuracy you have to develop a system of a wholly new order of technical sophistication. The system is very difficult to do and we are now face to face with a decision in terms of the growing cost of our overall Defense Establishment and we face that decision in the context of the fact that in the same two and a half year period we have made great progress with other weapons systems.

Now we do not have a fixed obligation to provide a substitute to the British, if in fact, after consultation with them it is agreed that the program should not go forward.

MR. LISAGOR: Well, couldn't this mean the British would then have to go out of the nuclear business altogether and how much of a disaster, or how bad would this

be?

MR. BUNDY: What I really think, Mr. Lisagor, is this, that if the Skybolt should be abandoned, after consultation, then the question which will face us and the British is the question which NATO has had on its plate now for four or five years, which is, what is the best way of organizing missile forces, post-airplane nuclear defense forces for NATO as a whole. The British have a great interest in this as a country, also as a member of the Alliance, also as a country with a new and emerging relationship to the Continent of Europe. We have a great interest in it as the principal nuclear power in the Alliance and as the place where currently the great and crucial decisions of war, or peace, would have to be made. But we have a equal interest, we and the British, in conducting our affairs with each other so that we do not entangle our relations with the great nations of the continent. But this is tough, and I think it is going to be -- if the Skybolt should have to be canceled, there will be a major issue here which has to be worked through carefully.

MR. SCHERER: Mr. Bundy, on quite another matter, the President proposes to leave the Adlai Stevenson magazine article flap to the historians and I think perhaps we all agree with him, but maybe this panel would be considered derelict for your version of if we didn't ask you/who said what to whom in this affair?

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MR. BUNDY: I wouldn't want you to be troubled with any dereliction.

MR. SCHERER: Thank you, sir.

MR. BUNDY: The matter has certainly had more than enough attention and from the point of view of the Administration has been fully dealt with by the President. I will say only this, that I do not think that anyone who actually participated in the discussions, the working group of the National Security Council in the week before and week after the President's speech, would want to get into the business of talking with reporters or with others about the individual positions taken during that time of great tension and great danger by individual members of the group.

I certainly would not want to do so, and have not done so, and I know of no member who has. I do not believe -- and furthermore, just on the evidence of how one feels about these matters, I don't think anyone who sat through those discussions would want to characterize the position of anyone else by saying that he wanted a Munich. That seems to me an irresponsible, unworthy, uncalled for kind of remark.

MR. SCHERER: Isn't it true that a man's given opinions change from day to day in the flow of these deliberations?

MR. BUNDY: Certainly.

MR. SCHERER: Wouldn't you agree though that the real

danger of such a situation, a man being tarred in print, is that the President might not any longer be given the full alternative to give --

MR. BUNDY: Well, I share the remarks, the views on that which were expressed the other day by Secretary Rusk. I just don't believe that in matters of this kind of consequence, members of the government with any self respect and any awareness of their own responsibilities would be scared off from telling the President what they really thought because of that kind of problem. It hasn't been that way in this Administration and there has been a good deal of discussion of a number of rather serious problems in the weeks since this particular unfortunate article appeared and I have noticed no such difficulty.

I sat for example next to Governor Stevenson the other day in a meeting of the Executive Committee and he was not abashed.

MR. SCHERER: You see no scars from this incident?

MR. BUNDY: No lasting ones.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Bundy as you know many members of the press believe that the controversy over the Saturday Evening Post article highlights a struggle for power between the President's advisors on foreign policy. Is there in fact such a struggle for power so far as you know?

MR. BUNDY: In my judgment the people who are working for this President in this administration are all of them fully engaged in trying to do the job to which he has assigned them and I am wholly unaware of any effort to play musical chairs among the President's advisors. The President is in charge of the administration. He has people where he wants them and I imagine that this situation will continue.

MR. SPIVAK: I would like to take you to the question of on-site inspection. Do we still hope to get on-site inspection in Cuba through negotiations with the Soviet Union?

MR. BUNDY: Our position is that the understanding of October 27 and 28 is not complete without adequate on-site inspection and verification. And in the absence of such on-site inspection and verification, the full undertakings on our side cannot come into force. But I ought to make it clear that we are ourselves continuing to maintain our own means of obtaining adequate information as to the basic military situation in the island of Cuba and we will continue to do so.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Bundy, those means didn't seem to be sufficient to check on what was going into Cuba until they actually

were in place. How sure can we be that without on-site inspection, missiles aren't being hidden or haven't already be hidden in Cuba?

MR. BUNDY: We can't ever be absolutely sure. You can't prove the negative and say that nothing has been hidden anywhere in Cuba. But I think there is considerable confidence in our intelligence community and in our defense establishment that by appropriate vigilance -- and there is proven ground for a higher degree of vigilance perhaps now than there was some months ago -- we can in fact maintain adequate safeguards on that point.

MR. SPIVAK: How do we even know that missiles went out? We didn't inspect the missiles going out. Didn't we just see the covers? Didn't we just see the crates?

MR. BUNDY: Oh, no indeed. The covers were pulled back off the missile trailers and we saw shapes encased in a thin rubber film which coincided with everything we know and have seen in May Day parades of Soviet missiles and unless we are to reach the assumption that somewhere in Cuba missiles or dummy missiles of extraordinary similarity were fabricated in a very brief period of time, I think we are reasonably safe in believing that this number of missiles did in fact leave Cuba.

MR. SPIVAK: Didn't we at one time think there were thirty-two missiles and thirty-two bombers and didn't the Soviets say that they took out forty-two of each? Wasn't there a discrepancy of about ten, there?

MR. BUNDY: I don't recall that particular discrepancy. I



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I do think that the figures that they say they have removed and that we have counted, in both categories, are consistent with our basic intelligence assessment as kept up to date through time.

MR. RESTON: Mr. Bundy, could I ask you a question about these great confrontations of 1962 -- not only Cuba challenging presidential power, but also the challenge of Ross Barnett in Mississippi, the challenge of Roger Blough, the challenge of a different kind of Europe, and Europe's trade. My question is this: Though we in our time cannot get all the details of this, I am extremely interested in how you keep the historical record in the White House. How is this done?

MR. BUNDY: You know I am troubled about that, too, because it is a fact that when you get deeply and intensely into a particular moment of crisis, the people who might ordinarily be responsible for maintaining the current records tend to be extraordinarily busy and there is a problem, here. You can't really set up a tape recorder in the President's own study, you can't be sure to have the task force historian in on every session so there is always a certain amount of incompleteness. That is the history of the White House over a 200 year period, or 180 years.

MR. RESTON: Would you not agree it is different from administration to administration? For example, in the Eisenhower administration you had agenda circulated ahead of cabinet meetings and you had a secretary of the cabinet who kept the record of each meeting. Now for reasons best known to himself, President

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Kennedy has done it in a different way but it is a more casual way, a more personal way.

Would there, for example, be a record of the famous meeting between Mr. Blough and the President, or, more importantly in your own field, between the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko, and the President on the famous Thursday afternoon?

MR. BUNDY: There are two different cases. I am not sure whether we have a record of Mr. Blough's meeting. We have indeed a record of any significant foreign conversation between the President and a leading foreign representative and we have a record of that one.

MR. RESTON: Does this go as well to trans-Atlantic telephone calls, for example, between Mr. Macmillan and --

MR. BUNDY: Mr. Reston, you have not gotten me into an area in which we are discussing not only our practices but our relations with other governments, and I think I will avoid the question.

MR. LISAGOR: Mr. Bundy, I am sure you have read Premier Khrushchev's speech of last week, and I wonder from it whether you are better equipped now to read Soviet intentions in the coming weeks or months in its relations to the West?

MR. BUNDY: Well, it is certainly an informative speech

basic intelligence assessment as kept up to date through time.

MR. RESTON: Mr. Bundy, could I ask you a question about these great confrontations of 1962 -- not only Cuba challenging presidential power, but also the challenge of Ross Barnett in Mississippi, the challenge of Roger Blough, the challenge of a different kind of Europe, and Europe's trade. My question is this: Though we in our time cannot get all the details of this, I am extremely interested in how you keep the historical record in the White House. How is this done?

MR. BUNDY: You know I am troubled about that, too, because it is a fact that when you get deeply and intensely into a particular moment of crisis, the people who might ordinarily be responsible for maintaining the current records tend to be extraordinarily busy and there is a problem, here. You can't really set up a tape recorder in the President's own study, you can't be sure to have the task force historian in on every session so there is always a certain amount of incompleteness. That is the history of the White House over a 200 year period, or 180 years.

MR. RESTON: Would you not agree it is different from administration to administration? For example, in the Eisenhower administration you had agenda circulated ahead of cabinet meetings and you had a secretary of the cabinet who kept the record of each meeting. Now for reasons best known to himself, President

Would there, for example, be a record of the famous meeting between Mr. Blough and the President, or, more importantly in your own field, between the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko, and the President on the famous Thursday afternoon?

MR. BUNDY: There are two different cases. I am not sure whether we have a record of Mr. Blough's meeting. We have indeed a record of any significant foreign conversation between the President and a leading foreign representative and we have a record of that one.

MR. RESTON: Does this go as well to trans-Atlantic telephone calls, for example, between Mr. Macmillan and --

MR. BUNDY: Mr. Reston, you have not gotten me into an area in which we are discussing not only our practices but our relations with other governments, and I think I will avoid the question.

MR. LISAGOR: Mr. Bundy, I am sure you have read Premier Khrushchev's speech of last week, and I wonder from it whether you are better equipped now to read Soviet intentions in the coming weeks or months in its relations to the West?

MR. BUNDY: Well, it is certainly an informative speech

in the sense that it is a major exposition in defense of Khrushchev's own position to his own people and to the Communist bloc. It is a very important speech because of the degree to which it sets him in direct opposition to the people in Peking. He uses an Albanian stalking horse, but it is fairly clear who he means.

I think that it is -- I don't think any one Soviet utterance should be taken as a signal to everything, but this is an important speech and I think it does signal a new awareness on their side of the difficulties of conducting policy as if the United States were a paper tiger. I agree with Mr. Khrushchev that the tiger has nuclear teeth.

MR. LISAGOR: But he was rather forceful, in a speech which seemed moderate in his attitude toward the West, he was rather forceful on the issue of Berlin for example. Did you see in that any indications that he may move on Berlin at a very early time in trying to get a separate peace treaty at least with East Germany?

MR. BUNDY: I don't think I would interpret his remarks on Berlin as being unusually grim in tone. There was no deadline and there was no real indication of a higher level of concern than we have been accustomed to over a considerable period of time.

Mr. Scherer --

MR. SCHERER: On that fatal Sunday, the day Mr. Khrushchev agreed to take his missiles out of Cuba, there was a rather hopeful view around Washington that liquidating the Cuban affair with the Russians would lead to settlement of other problems that we have, mutual problems, disarmament, nuclear testing and so on. What has happened to that view?

MR. BUNNY: Well, I think the truth is that in the immediate reaction, from the very great pressures and hazards, having stepped back from the danger, as the President put it, we did all feel a sense of hope that perhaps there would be a greater willingness in the Soviet government to work on and to work out reasonable answers to some of the great issues that confront us and have tended to divide us. Nuclear testing, settlement in the area of Berlin, the problem of diffusion of nuclear weapons and a number of others. If we could make -- that the lack of interest which either of us had in having a nuclear war might rebound and give us a chance to work on these problems. I regret to say that I don't think there has been major evidence yet of this kind of attitude.

We have, of course, been engaged in finishing up the immediate Cuban crisis. It is not all done yet. We had first to get the missiles out and then we had to get agreement that the bombers would come out, we had to get them out.



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MR. BROOKS: We have about two minutes, gentlemen.

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We now are concerned in New York with the form in which our understanding of the current situation and the undertakings on both sides should be registered.

So it is too soon to give up on this, but it is going to be somewhat slower on all the evidence than many of us did hope in the first reaction to the great moment of crisis.

MR. SCHERER: What do you think is our best bet for some agreement with the Russians? Which phase of our affairs?

MR. BUNDY: I don't think I would want to choose.

MR. BROOKS: I am afraid we don't have time for any more questions, gentlemen. I am sorry to have to interrupt, but I see that our time has run out.

Thank you very much, Mr. Bundy, for being with us.

I will tell you about next week's guest on MEET THE PRESS after this message.

THE ANNOUNCER: For a printed copy of today's interview, sent ten cents in coin and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Markle Press, 809 Channing Street, N.E., Washington 18, D. C.

MR. BROOKS: Next week our guest on MEET THE PRESS, the Sunday before Christmas, our guest will be the Director of the Peace Corps, Mr. Sargent Shriver. And now this is Ned Brooks saying goodbye for Mr. McGeorge Bundy and MEET THE PRESS.